



Online nutrition education: Are there really that many choices?

Since the onset of wichealth.org in 2002, we've learned a few things about what it means to deliver effective nutrition education that meets the needs of WIC clients. But what about other options for online nutrition education that have cropped up over the past few years? How do they stack up with best practices? Being the director of wichealth.org I am obviously partial to the experience we provide as being the best solution for online nutrition education. However, with over 20 years of experience focusing on researching best practices for online behavior change, I do believe I can raise important questions any WIC state agency should be asking when looking at potential solutions for online nutrition education.

Question #1: What is the platform upon which the program is built?

Meaning, is the basis for the system built on programming that is sustainable? For example, one solution that three WIC state agencies have adopted is dependent on Adobe Flash. This was a great feature when it was launched in 1996, as it allowed for easy web page animation, such as a cartoon picture of a vegetable floating into a shopping cart. Unfortunately, Adobe no longer supports Flash and, as such, the major internet browsers are also no longer supporting it. This

means that any programming built on Flash architecture will likely continue to fail over time.

Question #2: Who builds the nutrition education lessons?

This is an equally important question, as the platform drives the experience but the content drives the learning. What does it mean to be a content developer? Is it simply okay to claim that “lessons are created by WIC staff” and assume it is effective for a web-based experience? This is the claim of a more recent for-profit solution that a few states have adopted for online nutrition education. When it comes to content there is no question WIC nutrition staff are experts with regard to important material WIC clients should know. But that is only half of the picture. Equally important is *how* the content is delivered. Regardless of content expertise, in most cases, WIC staff are not experts when it comes to designing learning experiences on the web. So the claim that lessons are “developed by the experts” is actually very misleading and potentially tied to an ineffective solution. Liken this comparison to heart surgery. Without a doubt, a university professor specializing in anatomy and physiology likely has expert knowledge about heart disease. However, during major heart surgery, this same professor is likely ineffective when compared to a heart surgeon, in conducting the surgery itself.

Question #3: How can we select the best solution when our state requires us to settle for the lowest bid?

This is a common concern and, unfortunately, many times results in having to adopt an inferior solution no one really wanted in the first place. Fortunately, the answer is simple: Find the desired features and request bids based on delivering those specific features. Getting a sole bid is an easy solution when seeking adopting a program based on desired features rather than just generic online nutrition education.

As always, the bottom line is what is best for the client and adhering to that belief is the preferred strategy for driving decisions on which solution is the best one to adopt.

Healthy regards,

Bob

Webinar LINEUP

October 9
2:00 - 3:00 PM EST
Meal Planning Gets an Upgrade

The relatively new category "Meal Planning" will get two new additions to the series. **Maximizing Food Dollars** is our new take on the current lesson, *Eat Well, Spend Less* which will be retired. **Making a Meal Plan** is brand new and offers many tips and tricks outside of the lesson's main goal which is shopping with a grocery list. Curious to know more about these lessons? We invite you to join our Webinar on October 9th from 2:00 - 3:00 PM EST.

- **Maximizing Food Dollars**
- **Making a Meal Plan**

**To register,
click here.**



Resource to Action Plan

We have some exciting news to share with you. After eight months in development, review, and translation, wichealth.org is ready to announce new lessons and improvements to some of our most popular lessons. Heading your way this November are six new lessons to add to your library. These lessons fall into three different categories:



Children Ages 1-5

Be Healthy With Veggies and Fruits

Build Strong Kids With Dairy Foods

Go For Whole Grains



Healthy Families

Vaccinate Your Family

Be Healthy With Fruits and Veggies

Build Strong Kids With Dairy Foods

Go For Whole Grains

Maximizing Food Dollars



Meal Planning

Maximizing Food Dollars

Making a Meal Plan

Wait! There must be a typo. Don't we already offer some of these lessons? And why are some lessons listed twice? That's no mistake! Allow me to share all the answers to these questions, as well as highlight a new feature used in five of the six lessons.

The three "food group" lessons are, in fact, current lessons. They have been completely redone! They are going from last week's leftovers to this week's exciting family favorite! Like the food groups that can be offered for breakfast, lunch, snack, or dinner, these lessons are also

offered in more than one location. So here, you will find them offered to both children and families. You may also note some small changes in the titles. To clarify:

Be Healthy With Fruits and Veggies will be ***Be Healthy With Veggies and Fruits***, and the lesson ***Fruits and Veggies Grow Healthy Kids*** will be retired altogether.



What has been ***Healthy Whole Grains*** will soon be ***Go For Whole Grains!***



The Dairy lesson title, ***Build Strong Kids with Dairy Food***, will stay strong like it already is.



Just in case you missed it, we shared all the tasty details about these three lessons in a webinar in September. You can still check it out - [just click here to watch the recording.](#)

Just as every main course is enhanced with a few delicious sides to complement it, the relatively new category “Meal Planning” will also get two new additions to the series. ***Maximizing Food Dollars*** is our new take on the current lesson, ***Eat Well, Spend Less*** which will be retired. ***Making a Meal Plan*** is brand new and offers many tips and tricks outside of the lesson’s main goal which is shopping with a grocery list. Curious to know more about these lessons? We invite you to join our Webinar on October 9th from 2:00 - 3:00 PM EST.

No meal is complete without a healthy dessert. To round off the improvements in our lessons, the “Healthy Families” Category is getting even healthier with a new lesson about vaccinations! We will share more about this lesson in a webinar in November so stay tuned...



Remember those days of dining with adults who always wanted a cup of coffee afterward? Well, here's your coffee...Our new features even offer up the "cream and sugar!"

So, what is this new feature I mentioned earlier? It's yet another way we support participants to feel empowered to make a small change in their health and nutrition behavior. As your participants (and maybe even you) take these new lessons, they will see that our new lessons support a learner by ensuring she knows the basic information about the topic she chose.

Meaning, we've identified the "must know" information and deliver the resource(s) one at a time. Then, to provide choice in a barrier or needed skill, we provide a list of resources (information) from which to choose. Additionally, these resources have the option to take a "deeper dive" to learn even more.

IF a learner has shown interest in a particular area, then we know she will be more willing to engage in taking action in that area. Thus, we will deliver targeted and specific action plans to the learner based on her choices throughout the lesson.

And, your coffee refill: How is this different than lessons developed in previous years? Our early lessons did not deliver specific Action Plans. Action Plans developed more recently typically provided three general actionable areas from which to choose. We now have action plans that directly support the resources in which the learner identified an interest.

To finish off our coffee talk, we can't wait for you to take a look at these new lessons coming out in just a few weeks! Let us know what you think! You can continue the conversation over email addressed to becky.rivas@wichealth.com.



Want to share the
wichealth newsletter
with others in your State
or ITO?

[Click here to add individuals to
our mailing list!](#)

P.S. You can also include the
URL below in your monthly
communication with your staff.

<http://eepurl.com/dPg1Rv>

Health eKitchen

September Update

The changing signs of fall are all around us. The leaves are making their final show, football games are in full swing, and the kids are settling into their new school routine. In our **Health eKitchen**, lots of changes are happening behind the scenes. In fact, it's turned into quite a construction zone, though you would never know it. Our clients are still able to access and use all the normal features on the front end. We are excited to release our new look for **Health eKitchen**. Here is a little preview of what you can expect:

- Rebuilt from the ground up, this system is meant for speed with ultra-fast page loading that mobile users, in particular, will appreciate.
- All-New, mobile-friendly design with better navigation for smaller screens
- A blazing fast, all-new recipe search function
- Flexible recipe filters that will continue to expand after launch
- We now display "Total" times for each recipe as well as a breakdown of prep, cook, chill, and set times.

We expect to release the new **Health eKitchen** during the first week of October. While we continue to clean up our dust in the back, please take some time to enjoy the newness of the season. Here are a few great snacks to munch on while watching that Sunday football game or as a surprise snack when the kids get home from school. Happy Fall!



Baked Cheese Chips

Salty and crispy, these cheese crisps will be your new favorite chip.

WIC 1 WIC INGREDIENTS

 BEGINNER

 PREP 5 MIN
COOK 12 MIN



Easy Guacamole

Avocados are full of fiber and the healthy fats your family needs.

WIC 5 WIC INGREDIENTS

 BEGINNER

 **PREP** 15 MIN
SET 1 HR



Ants on a Log

Your kids will love to help make this snack rich in protein and fun.

WIC 1 WIC INGREDIENTS

 BEGINNER

 **PREP** 10 MIN
COOK 0 MIN



Homemade Goldfish Crackers

These kid-friendly crackers pack more flavor than store bought goldfish.

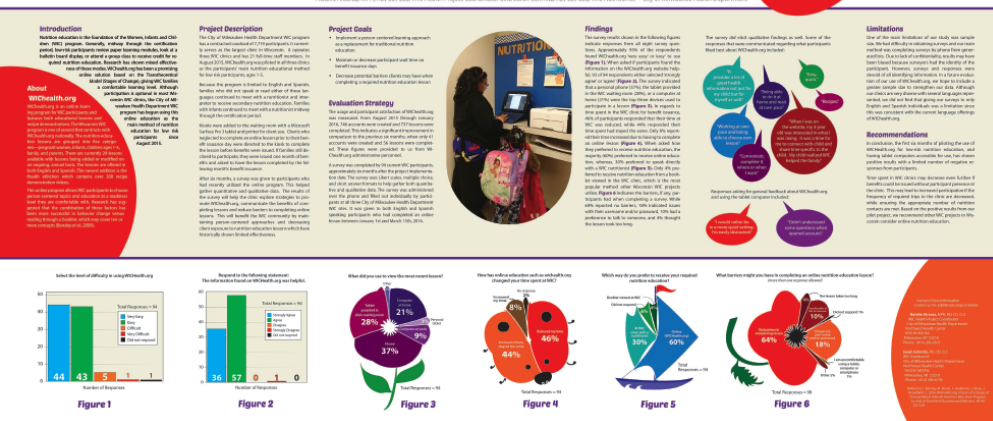
WIC 1 WIC INGREDIENTS

BEGINNER

PREP 15 MIN
COOK 20 MIN

Local WIC Program Conducts Research on wichealth

They're onLINE, but are your participants on BOARD?
Evaluating the implementation and participant satisfaction of online nutrition education at the City of Milwaukee Health Department WIC Program

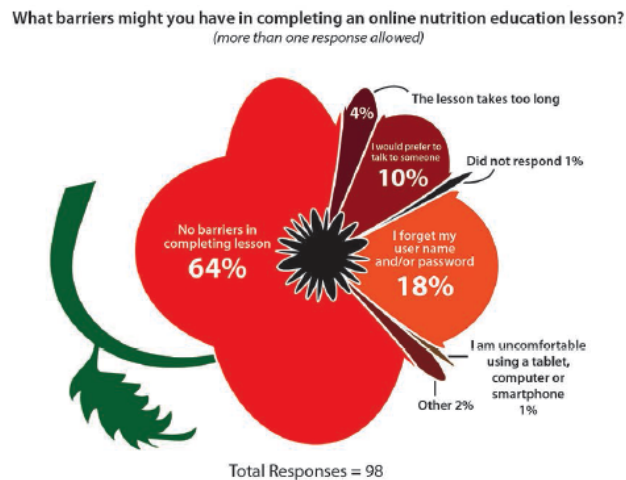


The City of Milwaukee Health Department WIC program began using wichealth in 2015 as a pilot in all three clinics as the participants' main nutrition educational method for low-risk participants, ages 1 – 5. The initial pilot had three main goals:

- Implement a person-centered learning approach as a replacement for traditional nutrition education
- Maintain or decrease participant wait time on benefit issuance days
- Decrease potential barriers clients may have when completing a required nutrition education lesson

The leadership was interested in determining if their clients had access to the internet as well as a phone, tablet, or computer to complete their nutrition education online as well as their satisfaction with wichealth.org.

As a result, they conducted an internal survey that was given to clients who had completed an online lesson between January 1 and March 2016.



Overall, the study showed positive results and in turn, the City of Milwaukee WIC has continued to utilize wichealth.org as an option for nutrition education.

In Milwaukee, staff follow 3 steps when introducing wichealth to clients:

1. Determine clients' access to the internet as well as a phone, tablet, or computer
2. Provide information and direction on how to use wichealth
3. Give clients a clinic phone number to call with questions regarding wichealth

Sarah Schmidt, a WIC Nutritionist with the City of Milwaukee Health Department, recently spoke to our Steering Committee about the project. She said she often speaks to the clients who complete their nutrition education as the phone number clients are given rings directly to her. Sara said she is able to help clients as needed and hear their satisfaction with the online lessons.



“They really learn something and are excited to share what they learn.”

At the time of the study, The City of Milwaukee Health Department set-up kiosks using a surface pro in their clinics, but they noticed most often clients were using their phones to complete lessons. Therefore, the kiosks have been removed. Now, staff often show clients how to signup and complete a lesson on wichealth from their phone.

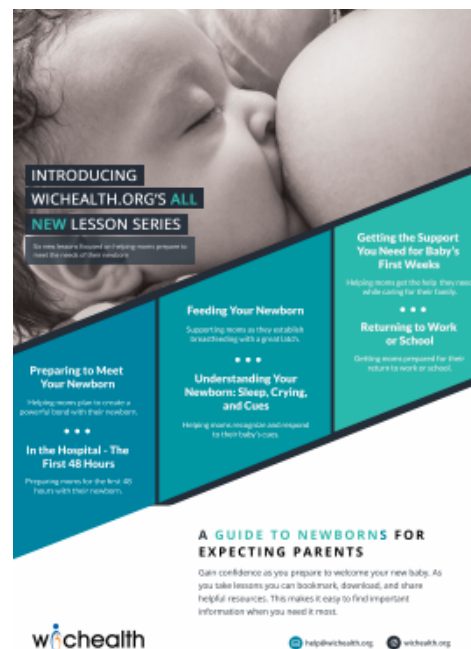
The Wisconsin WIC app includes a link to wichealth.org providing staff an opportunity to promote both the app and wichealth. Benefits can be added for the client without a visit to the clinic, but the client must call to setup up the next visit.

Sarah mentioned that The City of Milwaukee Health Department could possibly be interested in conducting additional research as usage has increased dramatically since the original study in 2016.

New Resource Available

To help you promote the lessons found in "Guide to Newborns for Expecting Parents," wichealth created a promotional flyer. The flyer can be found by logging into wichealthsupport.org and clicking resources.

If you have questions, contact kimbra.quinn@wmich.edu.



Navigating Change - Experience from the Front Lines

Implementing a new technology like wichealth can be intimidating. This video will guide you through the myths and answer frequently asked questions regarding the use of wichealth for your online nutrition education.

[To watch this video, or others, first log in with your staff account to wichealthsupport.org, and then click here.](http://wichealthsupport.org)

HELP DESK STATISTICS

FIRST REPLY TIME

September	August
3.30 hours	3.23 hours

SATISFACTION RATING

During the month of September, our help desk had a 98% satisfaction rating as compared to 100.0% in August.

Our Helpdesk tracks the satisfaction of both WIC staff and clients after using our service.

"Excellent, quick response!!!!"

-Missouri

"Am thankful to the Help Desk staff at wichealth.org for their willingness and completeness in customer service skills."

-Colorado

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